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ABSTRACT

Migrant students on the secondary level comprise an ethnically diverse population with many educational needs. Migrant Education programs assist students in overcoming problems that result from language barriers, cultural differences, school interruptions, credit deficiencies, educational tracking, and grade retention in order to ensure high school graduation and the pursuit of postsecondary education. Despite the obstacles facing migrant youth, their resilience and determination--in combination with the intervention of Migrant Education--have enabled greater numbers of migrant students to graduate from high school in recent years. At the 1988 meeting of Migrant Education Secondary Assistance (MESA), migrant educators listed positive characteristics of various migrant ethnic groups: extended family support, family unit support, a strong work ethic, group cooperation, religious and ethnic identity, respect for authority, strong life and survival skills, and a valuing of education. A general list of strengths that individual migrant students may possess includes maturity, responsibility, optimism, self-advocacy, resiliency, resourcefulness, cooperation, endurance, and a sense of humor. The focus on positive characteristics was described as an asset model, which has these advantages: (1) builds self-esteem; (2) builds on student's success, and improves motivation; (3) raises students' expectations; and (4) shifts the focus of need for change from the student to the institution. Specific recommendations and various topical concerns presented in this paper address staff training, school improvements, Migrant Education program service, and direct services for students. (ALL)

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CHARACTERISTICS
OF
SECONDARY MIGRANT YOUTH

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CHARACTERISTICS OF SECONDARY MIGRANT YOUTH

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Authorized by
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PREFACE

Twenty years ago, during the infancy of Migrant Education, few, if any, documents on migrant secondary-aged youth would have been available. The array of information now available on the characteristics of migrant secondary youth certainly attests to the increased services to this group. The previous documents have, however, focused primarily on the negative characteristics and in this report, we have tried to accentuate the positive. While we need to be aware of the negative characteristics and try to alleviate them in our programming we must also look to the positive traits and use them in promoting the educational success of the youth.

Migrant students represent a rich culture and ethnic diversity. The youth, often times, bring with them to the educational environment many strengths that have been lost by many of our nation's youth. This report delves into how we can capitalize on these strengths in serving the youth better both in and out of our schools. The late Dr. Gloria Mattera wrote in the article, "4-R's of a migrant child":

"Migrant children possess some remarkable strengths. They tend to be more resilient, more resourceful, more responsible, and more responsive than their non-migrant peers. Opinion? Perhaps. Without basis? Not to anyone who has observed them, who has worked with them, not to anyone who has seen how the migratory way of life and the extremes of near-poverty which it often involves affects these children, how it shapes the migrant child's personality."

The BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center has been a depository for information on migrant farmworkers and their families for more than twenty years. This library of resources provided much of the research material that was read, re-read, and then presented in this report. The ESCORT Program Development Center under the direction of Mr. Robert Levy, also provided ample materials that aided in the preparation of the report.

Thanks for the preparation of this document go to Ms. Anne Salerno, Migrant Educational Specialist for the MESA project. Anne labored arduously over each word hoping to represent the youth most positively. Also thanks to Ms. Mary Beth Bimber and Ms. Karen McKinney from the BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center for their expertise in entering the information on the word processor and their patience with the many, many revisions.

Robert Lynch
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In the past few years, a great deal has been written about the factors influencing secondary migrant students' success in completing high school. This report will examine both the positive and negative factors that are school- and family-related. From a close examination of these, we will emphasize factors promoting success and make recommendations for Migrant Education program improvement.

In 1974, the Exotech Systems, Inc. study revealed almost a 90% dropout rate for migrant students.[1] The Migrant Attrition Project's findings in 1987 indicated that the national migrant dropout rate had fallen within a range of 45%-65%.[2] This dramatic decrease in the dropout rate indicates effectiveness of Migrant Education programs over the intervening years. A 1985 survey of 1070 High School Equivalency Program (HEP) students from thirteen programs in ten states showed that those students who had been enrolled in Migrant Education programs had higher grades than those not enrolled in such programs.[3]

General Group and Individual Characteristics

Migrant students represent a rich culture and ethnic diversity. At the first Migrant Education Secondary Assistance (MESA) outreach meeting in October of 1988, the group of migrant educators compiled a list of some of the positive characteristics of various migrant ethnic groups. The list included extended family support, family unit support, a strong work ethic, group cooperation, religious and ethnic identity, respect for authority, strong life skills and survival skills, and valuing education.[4] These strengths are often overlooked in the classroom or misunderstood from a cultural perspective.

Photo by Roger Smith

The group also drew up a general list of strengths individual migrant students may possess. These traits include maturity, responsibility, optimism, self-advocacy, resiliency, resourcefulness, cooperation, endurance, and a sense of humor.[5]

From a very young age, migrant children assume adult roles and responsibilities through caring for younger siblings and through supplementing the family income by their work in the fields. The ethnographic study that was recently completed as part of a Pennsylvania Department of Education Section 143 contract pointed out that 15- and 16-year-old migrants often quit school because they were successful in the work they were doing on the farm.[6] Youth take pride in and have high self-esteem regarding their contributions to the family despite the toll this takes on their education. The study mentioned that even though there was success felt at home, the youth experienced a feeling of failure and criticism in the school environment.

Optimism, particularly by recent immigrants, can be seen in migrants' hopes for a brighter future and their belief in the American dream.

The Asset Model

A focus on these positive characteristics was described as an asset model at the MESA outreach meeting. Discussion of this model provided the following insight:

"Some advantages to using the asset model in supplementary education programs are:

1. Focusing on strengths builds student self-esteem.
2. A teaching approach that focuses on strengths builds on students' success, and improves motivation.
3. Emphasizing the strengths of migrant students can help to raise student expectations for them.
4. If the problem is not always attributed to the student it can change the focus of needs for change from the student to the institution."[7]

Teacher Expectations

By identifying a student's strengths instead of focusing on the weaknesses, more positive outcomes can result. High teacher expectations of students can overcome the negative self-fulfilling prophecy of predicted failure.

Paiz and Anaya identify four types of students:

"The high-achiever, the student who always does well and is expected to succeed; the under-achiever, the type of student who doesn't quite work up to his potential or our expectations of him; the non-achiever, this student is unsuccessful and will

always find school difficult and non-productive. However, the fourth group holds the "unexpected". The "unexpected" group is composed of students who succeed in school regardless of everything that educational research and society holds should doom them to failure. These students are enigmas in that the students should have failed because of background of "bad" neighborhoods, poverty and non-traditional families. However, they succeed, are tuned into school and are capable of accomplishing whatever the school demands of them."

The "unexpected" group that many migrant students fall into can benefit the most from a teacher's high expectations and the asset model.[8]

Positive School Characteristics

Rock et al showed how certain school characteristics and school processes influenced a student's achievement gains. They examined school climate, the academic emphasis of a school, students' ratings of the schools, course exposure, amount of homework, and the type of curriculum. The authors found that there were more achievement gains in schools that had more students enrolled in academic curriculum and that also provided many non-remedial courses in the "New Basics." School climate had a positive effect on achievement when there were few disciplinary problems and good parental interest. There were more achievement gains in schools where students gave high ratings of their teachers and instruction. Students who had course exposure beyond the remedial or functional level showed higher achievement in test scores. Students who did more homework also had increased test scores. Achievement gains varied by the type of curriculum a student was enrolled in. Those in academic curriculum did better than those in a general curriculum. Both of these groups performed higher than students in a vocational curriculum. The authors cite differences in course taking behavior in the three types as the main reason. Academic curriculum had the highest number of non-remedial courses in the "New Basics."[9]

Effective Schooling

Greg Druian cites research on effective schooling that shows the need for a clear focus of instruction, prioritizing and planning ways to meet those goals, optimistic staff attitudes that students can and will learn, monitoring student progress, and clearly delineated, fair and impartial discipline.[10] He also points out that successful programs are small, have cooperative learning, use constructive criticism of students, have experiential curriculum that is

more challenging than vocational programs, and have optimistic teachers who are involved in working with the "whole student."[11]

School Enhancers

During 1984-85, junior high migrant students in Arizona, Michigan, New York, Florida, Texas, and Wisconsin were asked by the Interstate Migrant Secondary Services Program what schools could do to encourage students to continue. Many students responded that the socializing factors such as sports, social activities, and electives were important.[12] They also mentioned the need for more career awareness activities such as field trips. Texas students were primarily concerned with meeting their economic needs through the school's provision of employment, job-seeking assistance, and a shorter school day to enable them to work more hours. Students requested positive, supportive teachers and counselors who are sensitive to migrants and bilingual teachers who are fair and in tune with individuals' problems. Other school-related factors students noted were a need for advanced programs to allow migrants to complete graduation requirements, compensatory means to keep students from losing credits caused by migrancy and transfer, and school-provided home study units for those who cannot attend school. Students also mentioned the need for hands-on courses, role models, better facilities, alcohol and drug awareness programs, and "in-school" suspension with tutoring and counseling.[13]

In the same study, parents felt there should be more career preparation and exposure to various occupations that can inspire migrant youth to set long-range goals. Parents cited the need for more counselors and separate counselors for each sex, greater cultural awareness, and communications to ensure that students do not feel threatened by their parents' involvement in school.[14] They would also like to see their children have teachers who are not prejudiced, who communicate better with them, and who encourage them to stay in school. Parents also requested smaller class size and more bilingual counselors.[15]

Teachers in the study recommended more social activities at the school, more individualized attention, supplemental services by age not grade, and greater program awareness for students.[16]

Work-study and training were cited by migrant parents, migrant dropouts, school administrators, and migrant tutors in a New York State survey as main factors that could encourage students to stay in school.[17]

Unequal Access

Rock et al illustrate the fact that there is unequal access to educational opportunities for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. In schools serving greater populations of these students, there are fewer students in academic curriculum; fewer

advanced academic courses; fewer math, science, foreign language requirements for college-bound students; higher absenteeism, suspension, disciplinary problems; lower student ratings of instruction; and less money for education.[18] The authors state that blacks and other minorities are almost four times more likely to attend such schools as white students.[19]

Tracking

Orum points out that Hispanics are highly segregated educationally. She says that, "Even within "integrated" schools, Hispanic students may be segregated by classroom assignment patterns. Sometimes special education, English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) and bilingual programs are used in a way that leads to segregation of Hispanics within the school. Grouping by language background is permissible only when it is done for instructional purposes and does not operate as a dead-end tracking system."[20]

Hispanic students are tracked into programs that make higher education an improbability. Orum cites the 1980 High School and Beyond Study that found over 40% of Hispanic high school seniors in general curriculum, 30% in vocational programs, and only 26% in a college-preparatory curriculum.[21] She cites the Current Population Survey, October 1984 data that indicates that Hispanics comprise only 5.3% of college graduates.[22]

In a New York State survey, there were only 14% of the migrant in-school students enrolled in regents college-bound curriculum.[23]

Jesse Vela, Director of the Texas Migrant Interstate Program, spoke to the Interstate Migrant Education Council (IMEC) in December of 1988 about the need to place migrant students in academic-oriented programs. Vela noted that many of these students are placed in the lowest English class, Correlated Language Arts, which practically guarantees they will not go on to college.[24]

Project AVID, based in San Diego, California, offers disadvantaged students with academic potential assistance in preparing for college. Through a four-year elective program, students work with tutors in academic areas that they will need to function at the college entry level. Project AVID motivates students to attend college, provides career awareness and enrichment activities.[25]

Grade Retention and the Overage Factor

Despite an overall improvement in migrant students' graduation rate, there remain numerous factors that impede academic success. Grade retention and the overage factor are among the most significant.

The Grade Retention and Placement Evaluation (GRAPE) project found that 31% of migrant kindergartners were one or more years older than their classmates which compares with only 5% of the general population. By second grade, the study found that the rate had increased to 50% for migrant students as compared to 19% of the general population. This overage factor is about 30% higher for migrant students after second grade until ninth and tenth grades when dropout rates rise.[26] The study cites findings that say there is a 40-50% risk for dropping out when a student is retained one grade and a 90% risk for two grades. With this in mind, it is clear to see how the overage disadvantage many migrant students encounter jeopardizes their chances of completing school.

The 1989 MESA National MSRTS Executive Summary examined the number of migrant students in seventh through twelfth grades who showed below grade level enrollments. For currently migrant students, 50.1% were on grade level; 32.8% were one year below grade level; and 17.1% were two or more years below.[27]

Other data from that report show:

-- "Students in the two grade levels, 7 and 8, account for disproportionately more students than those enrolled in the four grade levels, 9 through 12...
-- "There are negligible differences in age/grade placemen proportions between students grades 7-8 versus 9-12.
-- "Students enrolling in the summer term tend to be consistently at lower risk (more on grade level enrollments, fewer below grade enrollments) than those who only enrolled in the regular term.
-- "Currently migratory students tend to be consistently at higher risk than formers.
-- "Considering all students in grades 7-12, 1/2 of regular term currents appear to be on grade level (55% for formers)."[28]

In a summary on the grade retention issue, Morse states that within two years of being retained, any gain diminishes. The promoted student exceeds the retained one academically.[29]

A Wall Street Journal article in November 1988 noted the increasing use of grade retention nationwide. The practice is taking on a "punitive mind-set", as one educator describes it. In his article, Putka stated that in 1986, 27% of the seventh graders in the United States were behind by one or more years according to the latest available Census figures. The author cites the following facts about retention: it encourages older students to become dropouts; it is more commonly used with minority students than whites; and it hurts a student's social and emotional development.[30]

Overage as the primary dropout risk factor could be seen in the results of High School Equivalency Program (HEP) students' surveys where less than 6% of those students were at or above grade level when they dropped out.[31]

Grade level was one of the most statistically significant characteristics in a study by Graham and Seaberg, Jr. which examined high and low achieving seventh, ninth, and eleventh grade migrant students from Oklahoma and Texas.[32] Achievement was based on the California Achievement Test results. At the ninth grade level, high achievers were, on the average, five months younger than the low achievers, the largest age difference in the study. The high risk of dropping out that is associated with low achieving overage migrant students is evident in the ninth grade. Many of these students do not make the transition from junior to senior high school.[33]

A study by the Interstate Migrant Secondary Services Program in 1985 also documented the steady decline in enrollment for migrant students between grades six through nine and an abrupt drop before tenth grade.[34] The study showed enrollment in tenth grade to be half of that in sixth.

Photo by Liz Boettger

Extracurricular Activities

In a recent report, it was noted that many migrant students miss out on special programs, clubs, and after-school activities because they were not there to sign up for these in advance or because they feel too isolated and lack feelings of identity with the school. Sometimes school policy excludes those with low grade point averages from participating. Transportation can also be a hindrance. Advocacy is required to help turn around the situation to a student's benefit.[35]

At the MESA outreach meeting on characteristics, the group mentioned the prohibitive costs of belonging to certain extracurricular clubs that many migrants face. If students want to join Color Guard, for example, they need to find the money for boots.

Other School-Related Factors

A New York State survey showed that a student's reading level positively correlates with his/her general scholastic

achievement in high school.[36]

A survey of HEP students revealed that the main reasons students cited for leaving school were school-related. The three most frequent responses, in order, include failing in their classes, disliking school, and lacking credits for graduation.[37]

Sister Joan Hoolahan who was Migrant Education Coordinator in Delaware's Capital School District in Dover from 1976 to 1987, mentioned the need for year-around, clock-around schools to serve highly mobile migrant students. Since many of these students must work by necessity, they need the flexibility to study in their free time. Sister Joan reflects, "How many hours a week are we going to be able to work with this person? If we insist on a 9:00-2:30 schedule, forget it. The youth must support the family. If you are going to break a cycle of poverty, you must create a system that fits in with where kids are, not where they should be."[38]

Mobility Issues

According to a 1989 analysis of Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) data on enrollment of ninth through twelfth grade migrant students, there were about 40% currents and 60% formers in both the regular and summer terms of 1987-88.[39] The assumption of high mobility and frequent school interruptions must be re-examined in light of the latest data. During the regular term of 1987-88, about two-thirds of currently migrant students showed one school enrollment; about 14% showed two or more enrollments within the same school district; and about 19% had two or more enrollments across school district lines.[40] Former migrant students showed less mobility. Eighty percent of those in the regular term of 1987-88 had one school enrollment; almost 16% had changed schools within the same district; and 4% had two or more enrollments across school district boundaries.[41]

Other factors need to be considered when interpreting the data. Since the data did not show student enrollment and attendance, they did not count students who entered late and/or withdrew early and showed no enrollment on their records in another school. The data also did not record inter/intrastate moves that occurred between regular and summer programs as transfers. Moves to non-project areas did not appear on the records, either. The fact that nearly two-thirds of currently migrant students showed a single school enrollment may also indicate that parents are staying longer so that their children can finish the semester and earn credits.[42]

The report also examined secondary credit activity in grades 9-12. Almost two-thirds of currents and one-third of formers who were enrolled during regular term had credit added or updated. During the summer term, about one-fourth of

currents and one-eighth of formers who were enrolled had credit activity recorded.[43]

At the second MESA outreach meeting, which explored mobility issues, the group made recommendations for improved MSRTS services. They suggested training both migrant and non-migrant staff, increasing the use of MSRTS in schools, and setting priorities for data entry with actives before formers and secondary students before elementary.[44]

The need for institutional changes was addressed in the following issues: credit acceptance and accrual, incomplete records, late entry/early departure policies, lack of night or summer programs, poor identification and recruitment, and rigid state and local requirements.[45] To improve identification and recruitment in sending and receiving states, the group suggested hiring year-round recruiters, designating a contact person in each state, using Certificate of Eligibility family forms to identify all children in the family, and providing consistency in eligibility criteria/determination and national training and guidance by the Identification and Recruitment project.[46]

The outreach meeting also suggested developing state Board of Education guidelines for credit accrual and attendance, setting up statewide policies instead of district policies, reserving class space for arriving migrant students, increasing the number of P.A.S.S. courses and evening schools, providing more group counseling, and having the last school award credit based on withdrawal grades.[47]

Family Obligation and Support

García and Ybarra-García point out the need to examine cultural differences. For Mexican-Americans, there is a duality between at-home values and in-school values which creates a cultural conflict.[48] The authors emphasize that, "...the family is likely to be the single most important unit of the Hispanic. It is usually the core of his thinking and behavior. Hispanics have a certain "obligacion" and "cooperacion" (obligation and cooperation) to the family. In respect to the Hispanic self, he is likely to place himself second to his family, thus accepting a self-denial which is sometimes viewed as a negative self-image."[49] They further explain, "when a Hispanic student decides to quit school to help out the family financially, many school personnel view this student as not seeing education as important, or see his parents as non-encouraging for the student to obtain an education. The student is simply reacting naturally to his "obligacion" and responsibility to his family."[50]

Even though the educational levels of many migrant parents are low, desire to have their children succeed is evident. Findings from a 1988 ethnographic study of migrant families revealed a positive parental attitude toward education including

the belief held by many parents that more than a high school diploma was needed.[51] The study also illustrated that at least one person in the home had given encouragement and support to those students who had graduated.[52]

The importance of family cannot be underestimated in a youth's decision to return to school. In a survey of High School Equivalency Program students, parents were cited as the main people who influenced participants' decision to return.[53]

In a New York State survey, family attitudes toward education were perceived as very positive by parents and in-school students although the school did not perceive this attitude.[54] A youth panel of migrants at the New York State Migrant Education Conference in Silver Bay in October of 1988 mentioned again and again the importance of family support in their lives. Migrant Education must address the educational needs of the whole family to be truly effective. In-camp learning programs, English as a Second Language classes, amnesty programs, adult education courses, and cultural heritage programs are a few of the options that could meet family needs and be funded by sources other than Migrant Education.

Culture

As noted earlier, many migrant students face cultural conflicts between home and school. Diana Hellinger, Senior Associate with the Project of Equal Educational Rights in Washington, D.C., reported that in many cultures women drop out of school because of the conflict they feel at being a good daughter and caretaker and with getting an education.[55] Hellinger further states that about 50% of women become the head of their households.

Children in Need emphasizes that in single-parent households that are headed by women, the poverty rate is the most severe. Children from single-parent homes are almost twice as likely to drop out of school.[56] These facts call up the need to bridge the widening gap between education and income level that many women, particularly minorities, face.

Dr. Paul Goodwin, Coordinator of Rural and Native Education with the Alaska State Department of Education, spoke at the New York State Migrant Education Conference in October 1988. Dr. Goodwin, who is from the Inupiaq culture, mentioned the influence of culture on education. Looking at success factors, he noted that sex or race made no difference. "One difference mattered," he went on to say. "If you were Inuit and boarded out, taken to another place for high school (you might be sent to Oregon), the different cultural environment almost guaranteed failure later in life." He added that, "psychological things were happening to these students that would translate later into academic failure."[57]

Language

An Interstate Migrant Education Council (IMEC) survey of migrant educators in 1986 noted:

"...Among the characteristics identified by the respondents throughout the interviews were the linguistic needs of the students. The migrant student is oftentimes Spanish dominant or linguistically different, e.g., Indochinese, Japanese or Eskimo, of limited English proficiency and bicultural."[58]

A look at the demographic data from the 1986-1987 Migrant Performance Reports of the U.S. Department of Education shows that 74.6% of the population was Hispanic. See Chart.

Another factor to consider is the changing face of the U.S. population due to recent immigration trends. An article by Kellogg points out there may be as many as 2.7 million immigrant children of school-age within the United States.[59] Many of these children who are predominantly of Asian, Hispanic, and Caribbean origins, are in the migrant stream and in need of English as a Second Language.

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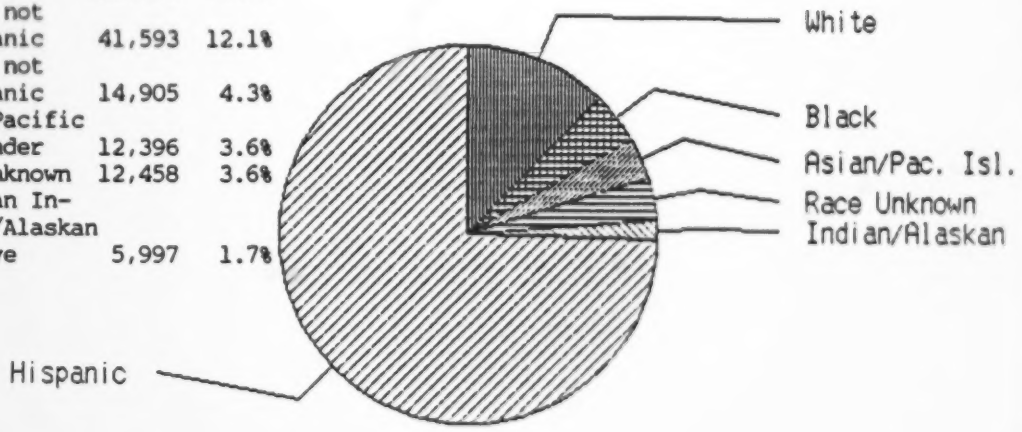
Hispanic	255,920	74.6%
White, not Hispanic	41,593	12.1%
Black, not Hispanic	14,905	4.3%
Asian,Pacific Islander	12,396	3.6%
Race Unknown	12,458	3.6%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5,997	1.7%



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Migrant Performance Reports 1986-1987

Serving Dropout Youth

Now that new legislation requires serving migrant youth up to age 22, it will be even more important to consider out-of-school youth. Robert Levy, Director of the Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT) in Oneonta, New York, believes that many dropout youth need a cooling off period before they are ready for an alternative program.[60] The amount of time will vary for each person and may be two weeks or up to two years. Levy feels that personnel should maintain contact with these youth while being aware that if they are too insistent on retrieval before the dropout is ready, they may slow down the process.

Susan Morse notes the difficulty of reaching dropouts in a recent MESA Bulletin article. She writes,

"Dropouts are an enigma; they are difficult to find; they often are embittered and disenchanted with education and educators (us?). Serving out-of-school youth will require some new approaches. However, they are also among the most needy. Remember one of "laws" of Migrant Education is that those in the greatest need are generally the hardest to serve. That's why schools have difficulty meeting the needs of migrant youth, and that's why Migrant Education is funded."[61]

Through interviews with migrant educators, MESA staff sought recommendations for reaching dropouts. Brigita Barobs, a recruiter for the Tampa High School Equivalency Program, believes that a good system of identification and recruitment is necessary. In her program there is communication with Florida secondary migrant advocates and the Migrant Dropout Reconnection Program who identify youth and contact HEP. Barobs also makes home visits, calls or writes dropouts to enroll them in the program.[62]

Juan García, Director of the High School Equivalency Program in El Rito, New Mexico, views an acclimation period as critical for success with HEP and GED programs. He believes that students need at least sixty days to adjust. García feels that student advocates could ease the transition by walking the new student through the system.[63]

García emphasizes the need for legislators to request financial aid for married students or those with families while they are enrolled in training programs.[64]

Post Secondary Options

Even though we are examining factors leading to high school graduation in this report, it is necessary to look beyond the secondary level. Robert Levy pointed out that there are high school graduates who are still working in the

fields.[65] When the bus comes to pick up the in-school students for night class in his program, the young graduates want to join them. These youth need viable alternatives to working as migrant laborers if they are to use their education and achieve success in higher paying jobs.

Photo by David Burke

One possibility for assisting students is the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). CAMP offers migrant youth the opportunity to further their education by attending one of a few selected universities throughout the United States. During the freshman year, CAMP provides some financial assistance toward tuition and fees, a stipend for living expenses, as well as tutoring, academic advisement, counseling, career orientation, and participation in college activities. The program assists students with locating additional sources of financial aid to continue their college education.

Other options are to link migrant youth with existing Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) on many college campuses and assisting students with scholarships at public and private institutions.

Summary/Recommendations

Migrant students on the secondary level comprise an ethnically diverse population with many educational needs. Migrant Education programs assist students in overcoming problems that result from language barriers, cultural differences, school interruptions, credit deficiencies, educational tracking, and grade retention, to name a few, in order to ensure their high school graduation and/or pursuit of post-secondary education. Despite the many obstacles facing migrant youth, their resilience and determination in combination with Migrant Education intervention, have led to greater numbers of high school graduates in recent years.

Based on looking at the data, an overall goal for Migrant Education in regards to improving the migrant graduation rate might be mandating certain services nationally. The services could include:

- a graduation plan for every student, or a G.E.D./vocational or an alternative plan
- interdistrict/interstate credit acceptance
- access to a credit make-up system (i.e., P.A.S.S.)
- competency test assistance
- training in life/survival skills

- affective services/support, role models, and access to someone who speaks the language.[66]

Specific recommendations and various topical concerns are: staff training, school improvements, Migrant Education program service and direct services for students.

Staff Training

In the area of staff training, participants at the first MESA outreach meeting felt that the following topics need to be covered: cultural sensitivity, rural education, migrant lifestyles, language skill development, cooperative learning, and teacher expectations. Training should be offered at institutions that offer teacher education, institutes, and inservice programs in schools and for social service agencies. Interns working in migrant camps or schools also need training. Mentoring, coaching, and training are additional ways to maintain and improve skills. Staff need training to assist them as role models, motivators, and advocates.[67]

Orum recommends that in order to better serve Hispanic students, there needs to be an increase in the number of teachers trained in bilingual, gifted and talented, and special education. She also calls for teacher training in multicultural education and strategies for teaching English as a Second Language.[68]

Increased staff sensitivity and cultural awareness were cited as needs in a junior high migrant study.[69]

School Improvements

Within schools themselves, there are recommended changes. Druian mentions the need for small programs that have a clear focus of instruction, experiential curriculum that offers more challenging roles than vocational programs as well as cooperative learning, and fair and impartial discipline.[70]

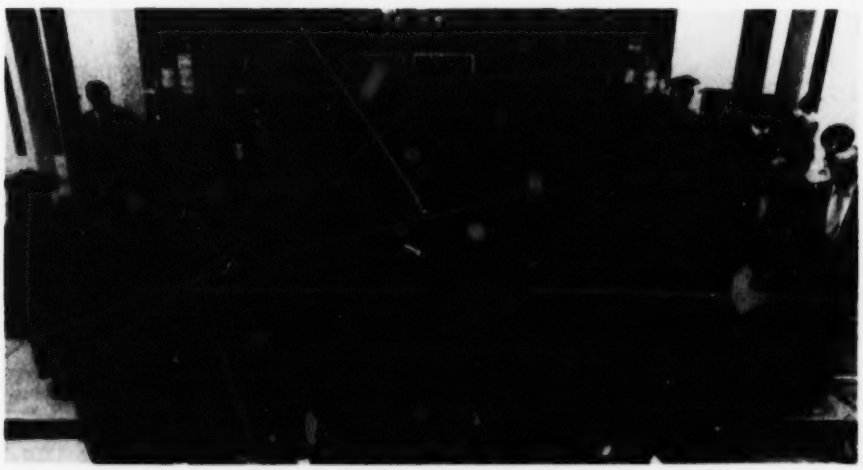
At the first MESA outreach meeting, participants recommended that there should be better communication between programs to ensure congruence; better needs assessment taken; more alternative programs that go beyond the school day; economic assistance to students through work-study and in-school scholarships; use of the Portable Assisted Study Sequence (P.A.S.S.) program and alternative programs such as Giving Rural Adults A Study Program (G.R.A.S.P) which is a home-study G.E.D. preparation course; child care; and more migrant student involvement in extracurricular activities.[71]

Work experience has been recommended in many instances. Children in Need states that work experience programs should give meaningful, positive reinforcement in basic skills and problem-solving abilities.[72] Apicella's study also takes note

of work-study and training as a school enhancer.[73] Anne Barry, Frank Ludovina, and Merced Natera mentioned the effectiveness of work-study in their interviews with MESA staff.[74]

Migrant Education Program Services

The first MESA outreach meeting recommended that Migrant Education provide more High School Equivalency Programs and Summer Institutes, supplementary activities and services such as interstate programs and the REAL TALK newsletter, and MSRTS tracking in alternative education programs that monitor G.E.D. progress, for example.[75]



Sister Joan Hoolahan recommends using the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) concept in the large sending high schools. Migrant students can benefit from the small size of the classes, counseling, and flexible scheduling. When students migrate, the school could arrange for P.A.S.S. program courses to continue the schooling.[76]

A number of sources recommend involving the whole family in migrant education programs.[77] Various suggestions include English as a Second Language classes, home visits, early intervention programs, and more active Parent Advisory Councils.

A recommendation by Cranston-Gingras and Anderson is for a counselor to form a group for migrant students to address their concerns.[78] Counselors could also help students develop realistic goals and provide interest inventories.

Direct Services for Students

Social service and community agencies, Migrant Education or schools may provide the means for serving student needs. The first MESA outreach meeting recommended that economic incentives for staying in school should be provided as through work-study, the Job Training Partnership Act, and Upward Bound program; dropout retrieval plans and programs need to be developed; training for independence and self-advocacy should be offered; and cultural strengths need to be maintained, valued, and enhanced.[79]

Children in Need recommends more involvement between business and schools in providing summer job programs, vocational and cooperative education, mentoring programs, and job placement.[80] The same source also contends that dropout retrieval programs that are most successful combine work experience with basic skills instruction. The Job Corps program, for example, has made the best long-term gains due to its residential nature, remedial education, skills training, and health services.[81]

While major gains have been made in the past two decades in the education of the secondary-aged migrant youth, educators and parents must continue to recognize and enhance the strengths and cultural values that migrant youth possess. Positive teacher expectations and solid family support need to be continued and reinforced. Programs that build on the assets of migrant youth must be of paramount importance to improve their self-esteem and offer the youth hope.

By taking into consideration migrant youth's characteristics, both positive and negative, the educational community in general and migrant educators in particular will be able to give migrant youth the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

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